

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1790

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT TU

SUBJ: NEW LEADERSHIP AT TRT

1. THE RESIGNATION OF TURKISH RADIO AND TELEVISION (TRT) DIRECTOR GENERAL YALCINTAS ON NOVEMBER 14 AND THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO NOMINATE SABAN KARATAS AS HIS SUCCESSOR MAY LEAD TO A NEW ROUND OF CLASHES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP). THE NOMINATION OF KARATAS, WHO IS A PROFESSOR OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AT ATATURK UNIVERSITY IN ERZURUM, HAS AROUSED CONTROVERSY BECAUSE OF HIS ALLEGED STRONGLY CONSERVATIVE (ACCORDING TO RUMORS, HE IS A SUPPORTER OF NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY CHAIRMAN TURKES) POLITICAL BELIEFS.

2. RPP SECRETARY GENERAL EYUBOGLU TOLD REPORTERS RECENTLY THAT "LEGALLY NO ASSIGNMENT COULD BE MADE TO THE POSITION," SINCE THE COUNCIL OF STATE (DANISTAY) HAD RULED THAT FORMER DIRGEN ISMAIL CEM (THE PREDECESSOR OF YALCINTAS) HAD BEEN REMOVED ILLEGALLY. SEVERAL PAPERS REPORT DECEMBER 23 THAT RPP CHAIRMAN ECEVIT

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HAS SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT KORUTURK REQUESTING THAT HE

NOT SIGN ANY DECREE CONCERNING THE TRT DIRECTORSHIP.
CEM TOLD REPORTERS THAT HE WOULD AGAIN APPEAL TO THE COUNCIL
OF STATE IF THE KARATAS DECREE WAS SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT.

3. YALCINTAS, WHOSE APPOINTMENT LAST MAY, FOLLOWING
PROTRACTED PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVERING TO REPEAL THE DECREE
LAW AUTHORIZING HIS PREDECESSOR'S APPOINTMENT, LED TO A
BITTER CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE RPP AND THE DEMIREL
GOVERNMENT, RESIGNED AFTER A FAIRLY UNEVENTFUL TENURE
AS DIRECTOR GENERAL. HE REPORTEDLY HAD COME UNDER ATTACK
FROM THOSE IN THE NATIONAL FRONT COALITION WHO HAD ANTICIPATED
THAT HE WOULD "WEED-OUT" ECEVIT SYMPATHIZERS AT TRT AND
TRANSFORM TRT PROGRAMMING TO SUIT THEIR CONSERVATIVE TASTES.
IN FACT, HE PROVED TO BE A BASICALLY IMPARTIAL ALBEIT
ESSENTIALLY INEFFECTIVE DIRECTOR WHOSE DEPARTURE WILL BE
LAMENTED MORE BY THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIS NOMINATION THAN BY
THOSE WHO APPOINTED HIM. YALCINTAS CITED AS HIS REASON
FOR RESIGNING THE COUNCIL OF STATE DECREE WHICH TURNED
THE "LEGAL STATUS OF THE TRT DIRGEN INTO A SOURCE OF
ARGUMENT."

4. PRESIDENT KORUTURK WAS DISCOMFITED BY THE
GOVERNMENT-RPP TUSSLE LAST MAY AND BY THE DANISTAY
DECREE WHICH CHALLENGED THE LEGALITY OF THE APPOINTMENT.
KORUTURK'S PRINCIPAL EFORT OVER THE LAST YEAR HAS
BEEN TO PROMOTE POLITICAL CONCILIATION, BUT, HOWEVER
UNWILLINGLY, HE PROBABLY WILL NOW BE CAUGHT IN A
GOVERNMENT-OPPOSITION CROSSFIRE. HIS OPTIONS ARE:
(1) PERSUADE THE GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW THE NOMINATION,
(2) NOT SIGN THE DECREE, (3) PUBLICLY OPPOSE THE
NOMINATION OR (4) SIGN THE DECREE.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Remarks:
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TAGS: PINT, ELEC, TU, TRT, (KARATAS, SABAN)
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